



Natural Area NEWS

Winter 2005

No. 16

Passing on the Passion

On a beautiful October afternoon, a crowd gathered at “Lantham’s Promontory”, in Tom and Jane Dustin’s woods high above Cedar Creek. Under towering oaks and hickories, as patches of sunlight splashed through the red, gold, and russet colored leaves, family and friends celebrated Tom Dustin’s life.

Herb Read spoke of how Tom had helped lead the charge to establish the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, chauffeuring Chicago Mayor Richard Daley and Senator Paul Douglas through the sand dunes in his jeep. Jim Barrett spoke of how Tom had taken him to a meeting with George Fell, one of the founders of The Nature Conservancy, and how Tom had led the effort to establish Indiana’s Nature Preserves Act. Dave Hudak recalled how Tom had mentored him through some difficult challenges to save some wetlands. Eric Myers pointed out how instrumental Tom had been in implementing the Indiana Heritage Trust. Jeff Stant told the gathering about Tom’s involvement with the Hoosier Environmental Council, from the early days on. Many other speakers spoke of Tom’s incredible energy, passion, and leadership in numerous environmental and conservation causes.

It was lonely being an “eco-warrior” in the early days of the conservation movement. Tom’s environmental philosophy, “always appear bigger than you are” helped buoy conservationist’s spirits, and was effective in political activism. Thanks to the efforts of Tom and his compatriots, an array of important environmental laws were passed that have significantly improved our quality of life. They passed their passion on to those who followed them, and the numbers of concerned citizens, environmental groups, and land trusts have increased dramatically over the years.

Tom Dustin was a giant of a leader. A number of the speakers wondered aloud what many of us were feeling...how can we carry on without Tom? Who will fill his shoes?

Tom said that an old Gaelic blessing best articulated his philosophy of life:

May those who love us, love us
And those that don’t love us
May God turn their hearts.
And if He doesn’t turn their hearts,
May he turn their ankles,
So we’ll know them by their limping.

While we can’t fill Tom’s shoes, as we aren’t likely to ever see another Tom Dustin, we will continue to be inspired by the friendship and passion we received from him.

Nature Preserves is a division of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources

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New Nature Preserves

Two new nature preserves were dedicated in 2004 encompassing 979.3 acres. Indiana's Nature Preserve system consists of 202 nature preserves protecting over 29,300 acres.

Lime Lake Nature Preserve, Steuben County is a 90.59 acre tract located about 12 miles northwest of Angola in northwest Steuben County. It is owned and managed by the Division of Nature Preserves. This property consists of a very diverse prairie fen, shrub fen, and marsh surrounding a small island of open oak woods situated on a glacial kame. Extensive marl flats border the shoreline of Lime Lake, which itself is a high quality, essentially undeveloped, marl lake. Open upland areas provide an excellent opportunity for restoration to dry prairie habitat. Signature fen species at this site include grass-of-Parnassus, tufted hairgrass, fen thistle, bog arrow-grass, shrubby cinquefoil, marsh blazing-star, prairie dock, big and little bluestem and prairie dropseed grasses. Numerous rare animals occur at this site: sandhill cranes have successfully nested in the open wetlands within the past five years; cisco or lake herring has recently been confirmed as occurring within Lime Lake.

Thomastown Bottoms Nature Preserve, Scott County is an 888.71 acre property located about 4 miles northwest of Scottsburg. This tract consists of extensive hardwood bottomland forest on the floodplain of the Muscatatuck River. Dominant tree species include swamp white oak, pin oak, red maple, and green ash; overcup oak is also a notable disjunct here. Occasional flooded sloughs are dominated by buttonbush along with swamp milkweed, rice cutgrass, and state-threatened featherfoil. This nature preserve is part of a larger 1428 acre property jointly acquired by the Division of Nature Preserves and the Division of Fish and Wildlife utilizing Indiana Heritage Trust funding. Non-forested portions of the property previously enrolled in the federal Wetland Reserve Program make up the balance of the property.

Fairbanks Landing Fish and Wildlife Area

In cooperation the Department of Natural Resources and Indiana Michigan Power established at no cost, a new 8,000 acre fish and wildlife area. Named Fairbanks Landing Fish and Wildlife Area, it is located along the Wabash River in Vigo and Sullivan counties near Fairbanks. Indiana Michigan Power will continue to own the land and the DNR will manage the land for wildlife habitat. The area opened to the public in November, 2004 and there is no entrance fee. The DNR has preliminary plans to build a boat ramp and improve habitat for ground nesting birds. Area residents will work with the DNR to develop long term plans for the area.

Natural Area News is published by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Nature Preserves. All questions, comments, or requests should be mailed to the Division of Nature Preserves at 402 W. Washington St., Rm W267, Indianapolis, IN 46204. We can be reached by calling 317-232-4052, or faxing to 317-233-0133.

Nature Preserves is looking for articles to include in *Natural Area News*. If you or your group would like to submit any news or information relating to natural areas and their protection, please send it to the Division of Nature Preserves, attention Ron Hellmich.

Nature Preserves: Identifying, protecting and managing an array of nature preserves to maintain viable examples of all of Indiana's natural communities for the benefit of the natural communities, their representative species, and future generations.



Some Indiana Land Trusts:**Northern Indiana:**

ACRES Land Trust
2000 North Wells St.
Fort Wayne, IN 46808

Trillium Land Trust
1717 East Lusher Ave.
Elkhart, IN 46516

LaPorte County
Conservation Trust
405 Maple Avenue
LaPorte, IN 46350

Glacial Ridge Historic Land
Trust
PO Box 627
New Paris, IN 46553-
0627

Shirley Heinze Land Trust
444 Barker Road
Michigan City, IN 46360

Wawasee Area Conservancy
Foundation
6938 East Waco Drive
Syracuse, IN 46567

Central Indiana:

Central Indiana Land Trust,
Incorporated
324 W. Morris St, #210
Indianapolis, IN 46225

Southern Indiana:

Sycamore Land Trust
PO Box 7801
Bloomington, IN
47407-7801

Buffalo Trace Land Trust
PO Box 2
Mt. St. Francis, IN 47146

Indiana Karst Conservancy
P.O. Box 2401
Indianapolis, IN 46206-
2401

Wabash Heritage Land Trust
PO Box 732
New Harmony, IN 47631-
0732

Protecting the Sugar Creek Valley: The Division of Nature Preserves and Land Trusts

A scenic new nature preserve is being established in Parke County consisting of 104 acres of high quality woodlands along beautiful Sugar Creek. In yet another inspiring demonstration of the “Power of Partnerships”, the site has been protected through generous funding from a variety of conservation-minded groups. While the Central Indiana Land Trust and the Sycamore Trails RC&D will own and manage the site, major funding sources include: The Indiana Heritage Trust, The Central Indiana Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, Indianapolis Power & Light, and the Wildlife Habitat Team of Eli Lilly and Company’s Clinton Laboratories.

The rugged topography of the Sugar Creek corridor has preserved some of the most abundant forests in Indiana’s cornbelt. While Turkey Run and Shades State Parks provide critical anchors of biodiversity, they are relatively small areas at 2,300 and 3,084 acres, respectively. The opportunity to conserve many more critical natural areas remains. Working with a variety of partners with shared interests will ensure not only protection of the last remnants of the once vast central Indiana forests but the preservation of many traditional rural land uses such as timber management, hunting, and agriculture.

For so many Hoosiers, Sugar Creek, and the wonderful state parks of Turkey Run and Shades that flank its course, have been the origin for many of our formative experiences in Indiana’s natural areas. There, whether floating the scenic and rocky stream, standing deep in the ethereal light of fern-covered gorges, or walking among towering hardwood forests, we have collectively fostered an awe and appreciation for our Midwestern natural landscapes. Today, the Division of Nature Preserves continues to work with its many partners to ensure that this Hoosier wilderness experience will be shared with future generations.

Ohio River Conservancy
1020 N Indiana
Bloomington, IN 47408-
8193

Southeastern IN:

Oak Heritage Conser-
vancy
PO Box 335
Hanover, IN 47243

East Central Indiana:
Redtail Conservancy
959 W CR 500S
Muncie, IN 47302

Whitewater Valley
Land Trust
4910 Shoemaker Road
Centerville, IN 47330

West Central Indiana:
NICHES Land Trust
PO Box 2790
West Lafayette, IN
47996-2790

Statewide:
The Nature Conservancy
1505 N. Delaware
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Restoration of Prairie Creek Barrens: Bringing a Lost Landscape Back to Life.

Long ago, in an area now considered part of northern Daviess County, an extensive grassland landscape flowed over ancient dunes of windblown sand. Through the years the landscape, known as barrens, was almost completely converted to row crops or pasture. That is, except for a small remnant found in Prairie Creek Barrens Nature Preserve.

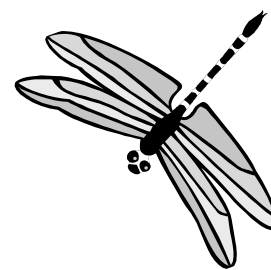
Recently we set out to restore the disturbed portions of the preserve. Most of the uplands were recently cultivated, and a high percentage of the wetland area possessed a thick stand of young trees. The challenge before us was not only how to return species of plants thought to have formerly occurred on the preserve, but to make the site suitable for their long-term survival.

We considered the wetlands first. Because wet sand often keeps buried seeds viable for long periods of time, we decided to do something radical, namely, use a bulldozer to remove the young trees and churn the sand. Such a measure brings the dormant seeds to the surface and provides the new seedlings with the necessary sunlight for growth. The technique has worked elsewhere, but would it work for us? Absolutely! Within a year following the clearing, a great variety of rare and interesting plants appeared, including several not seen before the treatment, such as Oklahoma sedge (*Carex oklahomensis*), Atlantic blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium atlanticum*), yellow-eyed grass (*Xyris torta*), and scirpus-like rush (*Juncus scirpoides*).

For restoration of the uplands, we elected to plant seedlings grown mostly from seeds collected near the preserve. These seedlings may represent the only possibility of a future for their parent's unique genetic makeup. Often the parent plants consist of few individuals, hanging on by threads in very precarious environments. By placing their offspring into the preserve, we hope to provide a sanctuary where they can reproduce and prosper. Volunteers have greatly helped in this endeavor. Over the past two years wildflower society members, college students, and the local community have helped plant over 5000 seedlings. And thanks to Golden Eagle Grants from Indianapolis Power and Light, over 18000 seedlings will be available for planting over the next two years.

Will the restoration be as diverse and complex as the original? No way. But perhaps, in some small way, it will provide a glimpse of a landscape otherwise lost to the ages.

by Mike Homoya, *Heritage Botanist*



Have you noticed?

Are you interested in learning more about Indiana's native plants? The Division of Nature Preserves staff have been writing regular short feature articles on Indiana's native plants in *Outdoor Indiana*, the DNR's magazine. These articles, which began with the May/June 1996 issue, highlight a particular species or group of plants. Look under the Plant Feature section of the magazine for these articles.

Outdoor Indiana frequently carries other articles of interest to natural area enthusiasts.

To subscribe, send a \$12 payment, and your name and address to *Outdoor Indiana*, 402 W. Washington St. W255B, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2742. For more information, call 317-233-2347. Or go to OutdoorIndiana.IN.gov

Using your car to support another cause...

You can still donate to the Heritage Trust Fund without buying an environmental license plate.

Donated money is used to acquire the same types of land as the license plate revenue.

Make your check payable to the **Indiana Heritage Trust Fund** and send your donation to: John Goss Director, Department of Natural Resources 402 W. Washington St. Room W256 Indianapolis, IN 46204

Indiana Heritage Trust

Projects approved in 2004

Site	County	Habitat	Cooperators (with DNP)
Pyrmont Mill Natural Area	Carroll	floodplain forest; upland forest; wetlands, historic features	Wildcat Creek Foundation; McAllister Foundation
Binkley Bog	Steuben	bog, rare species	TNC
Hoosier Prairie Addition	Lake	savanna, prairie, wetlands	NAWCA grant; TNC; Heinze Land Trust
Big Walnut NP Addition	Putnam	floodplain forest, upland forest	TNC
Portage Salt Creek Natural Area	Porter	floodplain forest	DFW; Portage Parks and Rec Foundation; Coastal Grant; Heinze LT; Portage Parks Dept.
Sugar Creek Woods	Parke	upland forest, floodplain forest, sandstone cliff	DSPR; TNC; Eli Lilly Clinton Labs; CILTI; Sycamore Trails
Moraine NP Addition	Porter	upland forest	U of Chicago; TNC; Coastal Grant
Olin Lake NP Addition	LaGrange	wetlands, lake front	Peterman Family; TNC; ACRES
Spicer Lake NP Addition	St. Joseph	upland forest, shrub swamp	St. Joseph County Parks; TNC; South Bend Elkhart Audubon
Oak Savanna Trail	Lake	savanna	TNC; Lake Co Parks; Heinze LT; Coastal Grant
Loblolly Marsh Addition	Adams	wetland restoration	Wetland Reserve Program
Bloomfield Barrens Addition	Warrick and Spencer	flatwoods, floodplain forest, upland forest	TNC; DFW
Neff Woods	Wayne	upland forest	SPUR; Whitewater Valley LT; Wayne Co Foundation; Ropchan Foundation
DNP = Div. of Nature Preserves; TNC = The Nature Conservancy; NAWCA = North American Wetland Conservation Act; DFW = IDNR Division of Fish and Wildlife; ACRES = ACRES Land Trust; CILTI = Central Indiana Land Trust; DSPR = IDNR Division of Parks and Reservoirs.			



Nongame & Endangered Wildlife Program

New law bans collecting wild box turtles in Indiana

A new law that took effect in October bans people from collecting eastern box turtles from the wild in Indiana. The turtle is close to becoming endangered in the state.

Studies show the male eastern box turtle must see or hear a female before the mating process can begin. Low numbers of turtles may prevent contact between males and females.

The eastern box turtle has a domed shell with yellow to orange streaks or splotches on a dark background.

Residents who currently have an eastern box turtle must apply for a permit that is available from the DNR at no cost.

Nongame Bird Management

Whooping Crane - This past fall, 14 captive-bred whooping cranes were led by ultra-light aircraft from Necedah National Wildlife Refuge in Wisconsin to Chassowitzka National Wildlife Refuge in Florida. Unfortunately, one bird perished enroute. 2004 was the fourth year of the Eastern Whooping Crane Program, which is attempting to establish this endangered bird as a nesting and migratory species in the Midwest. 35 adult birds survive from the first three years. If successful, this program will reestablish Whooping Cranes as a migratory species in Indiana.

Bald Eagle - Record production of this species in 2004 included 44 of 50 active nests with 85 chicks. Nests active for the first time were noted in Brown, Dubois, Fountain, Marion, Martin (2), Orange, Ripley, and Sullivan counties.

Peregrine Falcon - There were 11 nesting attempts this year, including 2 new nests in Lake County and 28 chicks were banded and 30 fledged at 9 nests. Pairs did not nest at previously used sites in Marion and Howard Counties.

Least Terns - Over 80 nests were tallied at the traditional Cinergy's Gibson Station, but production was again poor due to predation and other factors. Pairs nested in 2003 for the first time in Spencer County, but nesting did not occur there in 2004 although birds were present. To provide additional potential nesting areas with fewer predators, construction of tern nesting islands began at Cane Ridge Wetlands next to Gibson Lake and plans for additional nesting sites are underway at Tern Bar Slough next to Gibson Lake.

Osprey were released at Patoka Lake and the following Fish and Wildlife Areas: Jasper-Pulaski, Tri-County, and Minnehaha. Successful nesting occurred in 2004 at Potato Creek State Park, east of Potato Creek, near Kingsbury FWA, Brookville Reservoir, and Patoka Lake.

Beetles Making Progress Against Purple Loosestrife

Purple loosestrife is an invasive weed that spreads across wetlands displacing native plants and disrupting natural communities. It has been 10 years since we first released the beetle *Galerucella* to control purple loosestrife. Since then we have released the beetle at 48 different sites. Purple loosestrife is a long way from disappearing. But, each year *Galerucella* makes noticeable reductions in purple loosestrife at more and more of those release sites. And, beetles are flying from the release sites to nearby wetlands.

An analysis of data we have collected confirms our visual observations. There are not necessarily fewer purple loosestrife plants, at least not yet. The plants are much shorter and or flowering much less and producing fewer seeds. Shorter loosestrife plants are not able to crowd out the native plants, allowing the native plants to recover. For pictures of the dramatic decreases in purple loosestrife that *Galerucella* can cause see the pictures on the web at <http://www.in.gov/dnr/entomolo/programs/purple2.htm>.

We have also released two other insects to help control purple loosestrife. We have released a root-mining weevil (*Hylobius*) at 14 sites and a flower-feeding weevil (*Nanophyes*) at 5 sites. Neither is likely to produce the same dramatic results that *Galerucella* can. They should still help over the long haul.

We would like to see an actual reduction in the number of purple loosestrife plants, and will keep working for that result. So far *Galerucella* has been able to reduce purple loosestrife, and open up space for native plants, in a wetland far too big for us to ever control purple loosestrife by spraying. That is an encouraging start.

by Rich Dunbar, Northeast Regional Ecologist

Fens Benefit from EPA Grant

In the fall of 2004, the Division of Nature Preserves completed a pilot project that will help us manage fens better. Fens are wetlands with an unusual combination of plants from bogs, prairies and wetlands. They are home to many rare reptiles and insects. We know from aerial photographs that many fens have been lost to woody shrubs since the 1950's.

Before European settlement fens would have been kept open by fires. We have been using controlled burns to manage fens for a number of years. It has been difficult to burn often enough to keep them open, much less restore some of the fens that have been lost.

With help from a grant from the U.S. E.P.A. Great Lakes Regional Program Office we were able to try out some new methods and clear 57 acres of fen over a two-year period. This is far more than we would have been able to accomplish with the methods used in the past. Not only did we restore 57 acres of fen, but also the costs and effectiveness of the new methods will help us plan future projects. Last September 42 natural areas managers from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin came to a field day at Pigeon River Fish and Wildlife Area to learn about the project. So, the benefits may extend well beyond our borders.

by Rich Dunbar, Northeast Regional Ecologist

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Division of Nature Preserves
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Announcements

Shirley Heinze Land Trust Awarded

The Shirley Heinze Land Trust won the Chicago Wilderness Excellence in Conservation Award in 2004 for their Southern Lake Michigan Coastal Project, a multi-partner project in northern Indiana. This nine-year project's aim is to acquire, protect, enhance and restore wetlands in the southern Lake Michigan watershed in northern Lake, Porter and LaPorte counties. This project has brought in \$2.4 million into the Lake Michigan area for conservation work.

John Muir Marker

The Hoosier Chapter of the Sierra Club has erected a State Historical Marker honoring John Muir and the time he spent in Indianapolis. Located at the intersections of Merrill, Illinois and Russell streets in downtown Indianapolis, it is near the site of the Osgood, Smith & Company carriage factory where John Muir worked while here in Indianapolis in the 1860's. While working at the factory, Muir was temporarily blinded in an accident at the factory. During his recovery, he had time to reflect on his life and what was important. He determined to devote his life to the "inventions of God."